your valley

"The Grand River Conservation Authority is a corporate body established under the Conservation Authorities Act of Ontario to manage watershed resources and related conservation projects in partnership with its member municipalities and the Province."

Published by the Grand River Conservation Authority/Spring, 1990

GRAND RIVER SUCCESSFULLY NOMINATED AS A CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER

In February, during Heritage Week, the Minister of Natural Resources, Lyn McLeod, announced that the Grand River had successfully received its nomination as a Canadian Heritage River.

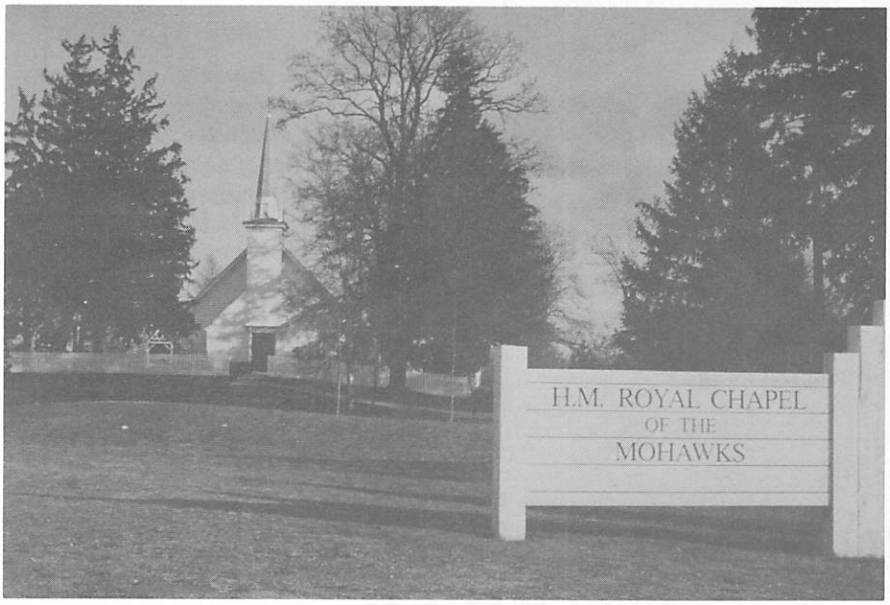
Canadian writers from E. Pauline Johnson to Hugh MacLennan have remarked on the rich diversity of natural and heritage resources, as well as the wide range of recreational opportunities in the Grand River watershed.

With this rich resource base in mind, the Grand River Conservation Authority, with the encouragement of local residents, approached the Province of Ontario and the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board in Ottawa for funding to complete background studies. These studies were to identify outstanding natural and human heritage resources as well as recreational values of the watershed which might warrant designation of the Grand River as a Canadian Heritage River.

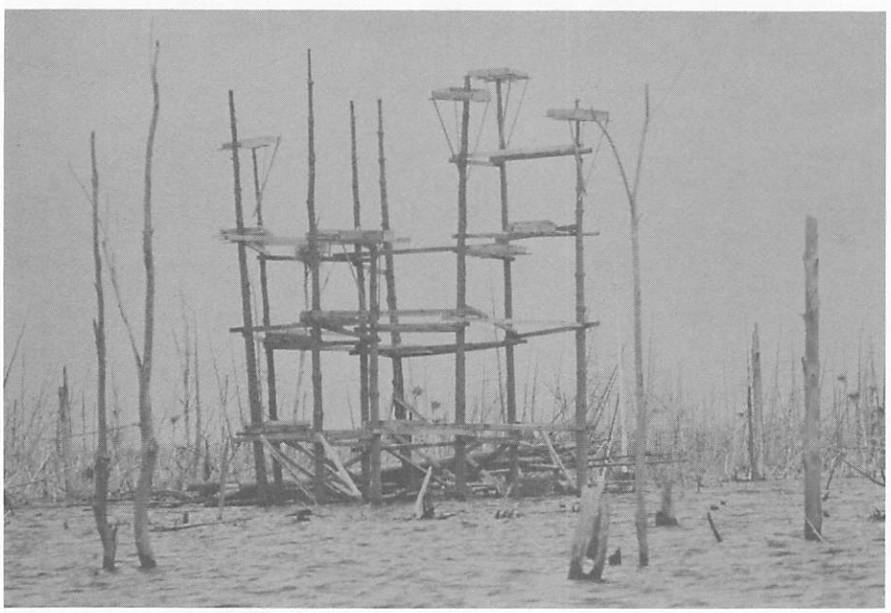
The Canadian Heritage Rivers System is a joint program of the Federal and Provincial Governments. The objectives of the system are to give national recognition to outstanding Canadian rivers and to ensure long term management that will conserve their heritage values for the benefit and enjoyment of Canadians in the future. To date, eighteen rivers or sections of rivers in Canada have been nominated as heritage rivers.

Enjoying one of the many recreational opportunities existing in the Grand River watershed, the Ancient Mariners of Cambridge set out on a canoe trip.

The Province of Ontario agreed to support background studies to examine the heritage values of the Grand River valley. In 1988, a Steering Committee composed of one representative each from the Grand River Conservation Authority, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Canadian Parks Service of Environment Canada was formed to guide the study. The Heritage Resources Centre at the University of Waterloo was commis-



As the first Protestant Church erected in Ontario, St. Paul's H.M. Chapel of the Mohawks in Brantford is the only Royal Chapel dedicated to native people.



The Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area provides excellent opportunities for naturalist activities.

sioned to carry out the necessary background studies.

Existing natural, human, and recreational resources in the watershed were carefully inventoried and analyzed. This information was summarized and distributed to politicians, government planners, heritage interest groups, and service groups for review and input. Members of the public had an opportunity to respond through a series of public meetings held in June 1988.

On the strength of these results, the Steering Committee, the Province and the Grand River Conservation Authority agreed to proceed with the next step in the Canadian Heritage River designation process, which consisted of the preparation and submission of a nomination document.

Throughout the summer of 1989, the Heritage Resources Centre carried out further studies to assist in the preparation of the nomination document. These additional studies related to human heritage, recreation, natural heritage, institutional arrangements, aggregate mining, information and communication, education and Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

The results of this research indicated that the Grand River and its major tributaries, the Nith, Conestogo, Speed, and Eramosa had outstanding human heritage qualities and recreational values which would qualify our river system as a Canadian Heritage River.

HUMAN HERITAGE QUALITIES

The settlement of the Grand River valley is of outstanding Canadian significance. Its importance can be summarized examining its cultural mosaic, native people, industrial history, and human adaptation to the river.

Cultural Mosaic

The Grand River is known for the variety of people who make up its cultural mosaic, from native people to many of the ethnic groups that have settled in Canada. In the north end of the valley, descendants of Scots, Irish and English immigrants are still a major presence. Many Scots settled in Fergus and Elora, or cities like Guelph where their presence reflects ancestral purchases from land companies such as the Canada Company. Many Mennonites, and descendants of German immigrants with other religious backgrounds, live in the Waterloo area. Descendants of United Empire Loyalists, and native people who came from New York in the 1780's after the American Revolutionary War, left their distinctive imprint on the lower river basin south of Brantford.

Native People

The native people in our valley look back on thousands of years of history that surpass the two centuries of European settlement in the area. The Grand River valley contains archaeological sites where Paleo-Indian tools and hunting artifacts from 7,000 to 11,000 years ago have been found. The archaeology of the valley also yields evidence of later Archaic hunting people (5000 to 1000 B.C.), and finally the Woodland people who were

originally hunters. The later Woodland people grew crops such as corn (circa 900 A.D.) and beans and squash. Our valley is currently the home of the Six Nations and other native people, the most notable of whom included Mohawk chief Joseph Brant, or Thayendanegea, and the famous Canadian poet, E. Pauline Johnson.

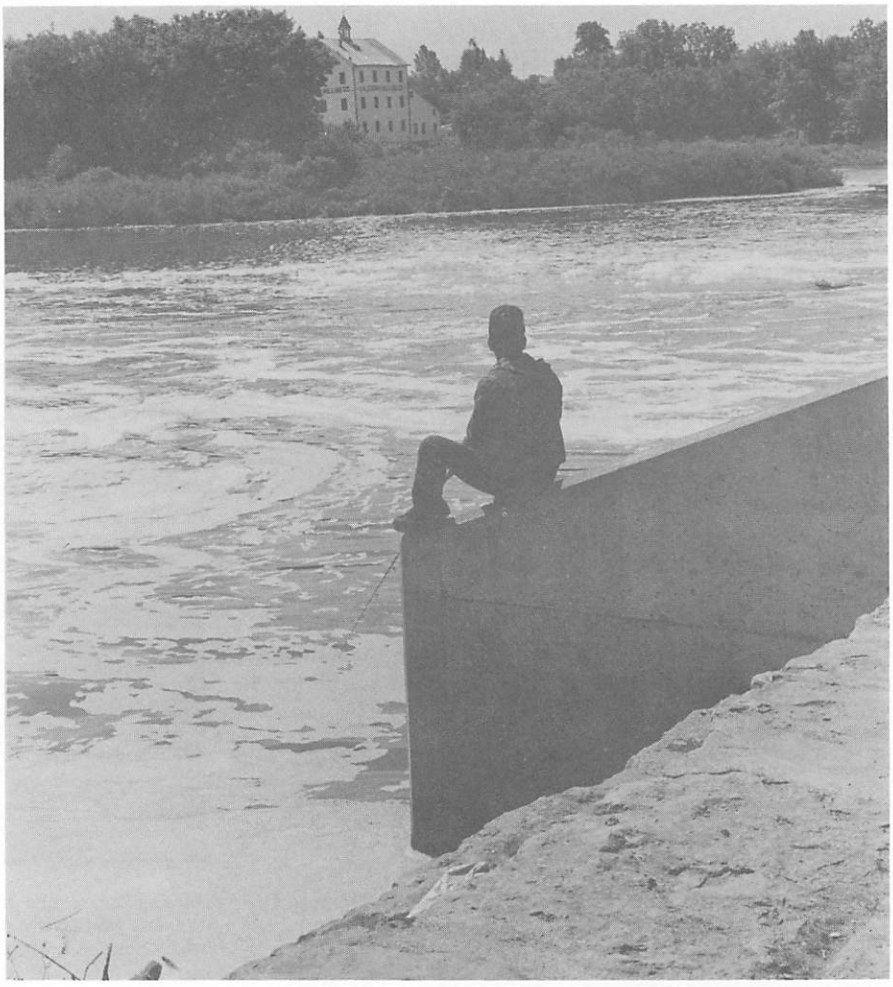
Industrial History

The industrial heritage of the Grand River is apparent in almost every town along its banks, and especially in the communities of Elora, Fergus, Cambridge and Brantford. Outstanding concentrations of historic structures include early nineteenth century grist mills, factories, and rare architecture such as the cobblestone buildings of Paris. In the lower river valley, from Brantford to Dunnville are the remains of the old locks and canals of the Grand River Navigation Company system which linked the communities along the river to the Welland Canal and other Great Lakes ports.

Human Adaptation to the River

The adaptation of the residents of the valley to the river is a remarkable story of adjustment to floods, summer low flows and other fluctuations of the river. Evidence of these responses range from levees, breakwalls and gabions to zoning regulations and flood proofing. Of particular interest are attempts to marry flood proofing efforts to recreation and heritage conservation work, such as the "Living Levee" in Cambridge, and the riverfront park lands in Brantford.

Other well known architectural examples in the valley include the Pioneer Memorial Tower, the West Montrose Covered Bridge, the Alexander Graham Bell Homestead, Her Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks, Pauline Johnson's home at Chiefswood, and the Shand Dam.



History and recreation meet along the lower Grand River as a fisherman sits across from the Caledonia Mill.

The "Living Levee" of Cambridge is a marriage of recreation and heritage conservation work.

RECREATIONAL VALUES

Recreational opportunities along the Grand River are rich and varied. Water sports include canoeing, kayaking, sailing, power boating, water skiing, and swimming. Quiet activities range from picnicking and camping to birdwatching and nature photography. Fishing and hunting are available, while road and off-road pursuits are found on hiking, equestrian, cross country skiing and snowmobiling trails, as well as on scenic drives and bicycling routes. Heritage related events include historic walking tours and visits to historic buildings and festivals.

Many outstanding natural features which occur along the Grand River support its recreation and tourism opportunities. Examples include the extensive wetlands at Luther Marsh and in the Dunnville area, the deep gorge at Elora, and the unparalleled glacial potholes at Rockwood. The Grand River Forest is a nationally significant resource, with its extensive woodlands comprised of many Carolinian flora and fauna species found only in southern Ontario. Notable examples of recessional moraines, tills, and other remnants of glaciation are scattered across the watershed.

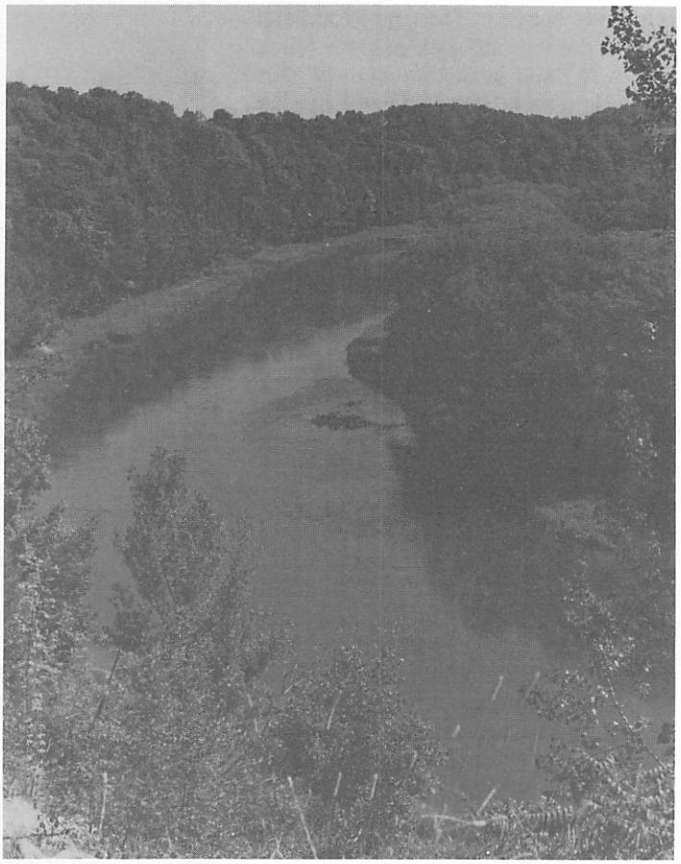
NOMINATION DOCUMENT ACCEPTED

The nomination document was completed in January 1990 and the case for the Grand River and its major tributaries as a Canadian Heritage River was presented to the Canadian Heritage River Board. The Board supported the nomination and in February, during Heritage Week, the Minister of Natural Resources, Lyn McLeod, announced that the Grand River had successfully received its nomination as a Canadian Heritage River.

The final step in the Heritage River designation process will be the formulation of a plan which specifies how activities will be administered by agencies, groups and individuals in the valley in order to appropriately use and protect the outstanding heritage and recreational values identified in the nomination document. Throughout the development of this plan, resource agencies, ministries, watershed municipalities, interest groups and local residents will be provided with the opportunity to reconsider the values they attach to specific natural and cultural resources.

"Your Valley" is a topical publication of the Grand River Conservation Authority that complements regular editions of "On The Grand." Since only single copies of "Your Valley" will be sent to addresses on our mailing list, multiple copies or back issues may be obtained by contacting the Communications Section of the Grand River Conservation Authority at (519) 621-2761, in Cambridge, Ontario.

CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVERS SYSTEM



The Grand River and its major tributaries, the Nith, Conestogo, Speed and Eramosa have outstanding human heritage qualities and recreational values which have qualified the river system for nomination as a Canadian Heritage River.

DESIGNATION

Once the plan for managing heritage resources is completed and accepted by the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board, the Grand River and its major tributaries will be designated as a Canadian Heritage River.

Designation of the Grand River does not bring any specific standards or regulations to guide use or conservation. The protection of outstanding heritage features will be advanced through strategies developed within the scope of existing policies and programs, as well as legislative and financial arrangements.

To this end, the Grand River Conservation Authority will promote both a broader approach to managing resources across municipal boundaries as well as a greater degree of co-operation between the private and public sectors. The Authority is committed to incorporating the plan for managing heritage resources as part of its overall Resource Management Plan, which is currently being updated in consultation with watershed municipalities, resource agencies and residents.

Few river valleys in Canada have seen as much of the flow of history as the Grand. The designation of the Grand River marks a watershed which will make all valley residents more aware of the significance and potential of our beautiful river system.